



Motivation in Reading among Learners of English as a Second Language

¹Zahid Ali ²Farhad Qassem ³Illahi Bux Gopang (corresponding author)

⁴Dr. Faraz Ali Bughio

¹PhD scholar, University of Malaya, Malaysia
zahiimahii85@gmail.com

²PhD scholar, University of Malaya, Malaysia

³M.Phil Scholar, University of Sindh, Pakistan
ibenglican@gmail.com

⁴Assistant Professor, IELL, University Of Sindh, Pakistan.
faraz_bughio@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT

The prominent significance of motivation on all skills of language learning is brilliant to all. Despite considerable researches have been done on motivation, there is no sufficient study on the effects of motivation on reading. So far, this study attempts to demonstrate influences of different types of motivation on reading of second language learners. Using a qualitative case study approach, this study examines different aspects of motivation affects on 20 Malaysian girls studying in Master Degree in University of Malaya. The candidates took part in an interview and all questions were explained to them and then they filled up a reconstructed Wigfield questionnaire. The challenge of identifying different types of motivation led to finding out that efficacy and competition in reading plays significant role in reading activities. In sum, the data is presenting the crucial issue that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation empowers each other.

Key words: Motivation; Intrinsic; Extrinsic; Reading efficacy; Competition in reading.

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INTRODUCTION

Most of the research on students' reading activities has focused on cognitive views like comprehension and reading strategies. Much of publications in 1980s and 1990s worked on cognitive processes in reading (Barr, Kamil, Mosenthal, & Pearson, 2014 ;). Since reading is a difficult activity and because it is optional and individual activity, readers often can select to do or not to do it, so it also requires motivation. As we know, motivation has been considered as one of the most important factors affecting L2 learning (e.g., Gardner, 1985, Day & Bamford, 1998). In fact, skillful readers can hardly be effective readers unless they are motivated. So our objective in this research is to identify the types of motivation which are used in students' reading, and to examine the reasons for using such types of motivation. In light of this, we should mention that reading behaviors are affected by motivation across culture and language (Wigfield, 1997). Various motivation forms are important in relation to reading performance (Wigfield & Guthrie 1997). In accordance, aside viewing motivation in various perspectives Do"nyei (1998) argued that motivation in different learners is unstable and is affected by many external and internal factors as it evolves. The method which has employed to achieve this end in this study is a field work questionnaire called the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) developed by Wigfield and his colleagues (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). There were eight participants who were assumed for taking part in a semi-structured interview to gain answers of research questions. The data in the present study clearly speak to examine two different research questions which are followed: 1) *What are the types of motivation used for reading activities* 2) *What are reasons for using such type of motivation in reading*

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature of review will focus specially on studies concerning reading motivations. Vast amount of research studies have been conducted to scrutinize the role of motivation in general (Deci, & Ryan, 1985). In this vein, research over 20 years showed that students' motivation is the primary concern of many teachers, and also demonstrated that lack of motivation is at the basis of students' reading problems (Gambrell, Guthrie, 1998). The research have illustrated that students who are offered extrinsic prizes become dependent on the rewards for their motivation so they read less frequently when these prizes are not available. In contrast, readers with intrinsic motivations perform reading activity continually (Guthrie et al., 1998). Wang and Guthrie implied that intrinsic motivation; consists of pleasure of reading, lead to reading comprehension positively. Conversely, extrinsic motivation: involving those who read because of external demands, such as admitting by teachers or competition with others, result in negative comprehension. Numerous studies authenticate the claim that motivation plays a main role in learning especially in reading (Deci & Ryan, 1985) asserts that motivation indicates the crucial difference between temporary and superficial learning and internalized and permanent learning. Researches performed in the past several years implied that motivated school students spend more time in reading than those who are not motivated (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). These studies demonstrate that the more time students spend for reading the better readers they become (Wang & Guthrie, 2004).

Theory of motivation

Since most of early psychological works on motivation was based on findings of animals' behavior in laboratories, psychologist attempt to describe motivation in terms of how animals behaved to achieve their basic biological needs, how they reinforce animals to have such behavior and off course, how this reinforcement lead to other events which occurred at the same time. This kind of approach led to behaviorists' view of motivation: which explains motivation in terms of external forces. It claims that specific conditions caused different kinds of behavior and the results of this behavior affect whether it is more or less likely to happen again (Williams & Burden 1997). Cognitive view of motivation: asserts that motivation is reasons why people decide to act in specific way and what factors affect the choices they make. Therefore; "a cognitive view of motivation, then, centers around individuals making decisions about their own actions as opposed to being at the mercy of external forces over which they have no control" (Williams & Burden, 1997,p.119). A social constructivist perspective of motivation talks about this important issue that each individual is motivated differently. Various external influences affect different people in their personal ways (Williams & Burden, 1997).

A proposed definition of motivation: This article is situated within different aspects of motivation. Motivation may be constructed as "*a state of cognitive and emotional arousal, which leads to a conscious decision to act, and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goal or goals*" (Williams & Burden 1997, p.120). In the light of this, it is clear that motivation is illustration of a combination of internal influences (which come from inside the learner) and external influences (which come from outside). This internal-external distinction is a crucial issue which plays an important role in many current theories of motivation (Williams & Burden 1997, p.120 -121). To make the literature on motivation much more clear, it is so helpful to distinguish three different stages. First, there are reasons for performing a special issue. Second, we consider what is actually involved in coming to a decision to do something. Third, people need to persist the attempt required to complete the activity (Williams & Burden 1997). Thus, it is significant to emphasize that motivation is not only simply arousing interests but also persisting the interest and devoting time and energy to gain certain goals. Different types of reasons make people to perform particular activity. Sometimes we do something because we enjoy doing it. At other times we are not interested in the activity itself but doing it may help us to achieve something else which is significant for us, the former talks about intrinsic motivation and the later mentions extrinsic motivation. All these reasons made experts to draw a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. According to Williams and Burden (1997), intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation as followed:



INTRINSIC	EXTRINSIC
Preference for challenge	Preference for easy work
Curiosity/interest	Pleasing teacher/getting grades
Independent mastery	Dependence on teacher in figuring out problems
Independent judgment	Reliance on teacher judgment about what to do
Internal criteria for success	External criteria for success

It has also been suggested that all the mentioned factors are interacting to affect each other; it means that one form of motivation influences another form.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

A total of 20 Malaysian female students studying Master degree in UM (university of Malaya) participated in this study. The range of students' age was from 24 to 28 years old. They were all known as second language learners, who use Malay language as first language at their homes. Among participants, 60% had fathers who had attained a university and 45% had mothers who had attained university. From them, 80% reported that they subscribed to English newspaper and 20% of them reported subscribing to Malay language newspaper.

Measures

In this mini research work we intend to study different types of motivation and their influences on reading. Drawing on this work wigfield and Guthrie (1997) conceptualized three categories of reading motivation which include 11 different dimensions of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The first category is based on competence and efficacy beliefs which consists of further three dimensions including; *self-efficacy*: the belief that to what extent one can be successful in reading, and *challenge*: the feeling that makes someone do difficult reading activities, and the last dimension in this category is *work avoidance*, which is willingness to avoid specific activity (reading activity). Next category concerns the purposes that students have for reading which is composed of six different dimensions. These dimensions comprise several constructs from the motivation field, including extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, achievement goal orientations and achievement values. Reading curiosity, reading involvement, importance of reading, reading for grades, competition, and recognition for reading are different constructs of this category. *Curiosity* is known as the desire to read special subject. *Involvement* is to enjoy reading particular types of information texts. *Reading for grade*; the pleasure to be known by teacher through evaluating. *Importance of reading*, reading is much more significant than other activities in one's idea. *Competition*, showing one's dominancy in reading. *Recognition for reading* is the pleasure of receiving official appreciation of success. The last category addresses social purposes for reading including *social reasons for reading* which means to share what you gain from reading special title with your family or friends, and *compliance*: the tendency and desire to meet the expectation of others (in reading). This Motivation for Reading Questionnaire has developed by Wigfield and Guthrie to assess the extent of the students' motivation in reading and also to examine different aspects of their motivation in 1995. They improved the questionnaire by dividing questions to eleven groups of reading motivation with the help of interviews with students, lining it up with motivational theory, and scrutiny of different classroom reading instructions (Guthrie et al., 1996) in 1997. In this study we intend to work on four important dimensions of this questionnaire including *reading efficacy*, *reading importance*, *competition for reading*, *reading for grades*.

In this study we used the technique of focus group interview; eight of the students were interviewed for approximately 1 hour and a half on reading motivation particularly in relation to four subscales of motivation, reading efficacy, reading importance, competition in reading, and reading for grades. Then the questionnaires were distributed among 20 Malaysian female students, and all questions were described one by one to ensure that all items included in questionnaire made sense to all participants.

RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics for the 15 statements are summarized in table 1. Items with the four highest average scores among this students population were learning more from reading than other students ($M= 5.80$ $SD=5.65$), like being the best at



reading (M=5.40 SD=5.30,) parents ask about reading grades (M=5.30 SD=1.08), reading is more important comparing other activities (M=5.20 SD=4.10).

Item NO. 02, "I am a good reader", stood out from other items with the lowest mean (3.90 compared to highest mean of 5.80 item 03) and high standard deviation (4.02) demonstrate that being a good reader expressed a lower than normal willingness among female second language learners. So far, a high standard deviation shows a high variation of perception on this case among participating students. Furthermore, some students claimed that it is very important for them to be a good reader and some of them want to be the best one in reading.

Apart from Item 02, items with four lowest means consist of "it is important to be a good reader" (M=4.05 SD=4.59), "like being the only one who knows the answer of what have been read" (M=4.70 SD=2.08), "looking forward finding out reading grades" (M=4.90 SD=3.95), "being important to see their names in a list of good readers" (M=4.90 SD=4.65). All these items, however, had means above average 4.0. Generally speaking, participants indicated that: showing their reading ability to others (by grades to parents or on list to other classmates or teachers) is so significant for them among different items especially extrinsic motivation subscales.

Table 01.Descriptive statistics for the 15 statements

Items	N	Mean	Std Dev
1. I don't know that I will do well in reading next year	20	4.65	3.05
2. I am a good reader	20	3.90	4.02
3. I learn more from reading than most students in the class	20	5.80	5.65
4. It is very important to me to be a good reader	20	4.05	4.59
5. In comparison to other activities I do, it is very important to me to be a good reader	20	5.20	4.10
6. I try to get more answers right than y friends	20	5.10	4.40
7. I like being the best at reading	20	5.40	5.30
8. I like to finish my reading before other students	20	5.05	2.44
9. I like being the only one who knows an answer in something we read	20	4.70	2.08
10. It is very important for me to see my name on a list of good readers	20	4.90	4.61
11. I am willing to work hard to read better than my friends	20	5.10	5.66
12. Grades are a good way to see how well you are doing in reading	20	5.10	3.43
13. I look forward to finding out my reading grades	20	4.90	3.95
14. I read to improve my grades	20	4.95	4.05
15. My parents ask me about my reading grade	20	5.30	1.08

Note: variables ranged from 1 to 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This mini research work examined various motivational aspects in Malaysian second language learners. The study revealed that among four various factors (self efficacy, reading importance, competition in reading, and reading for grades) which were assessed, two of them: reading efficacy and competition in reading, plays more significant role in students reading. 60% of students claimed that reading efficacy items are liked by them and 47% mentioned that competition in reading is liked by them and 45% said that it is very liked by them. So reading for grades and reading importance has lower influences in various types of motivation in reading. Among different items the third item which belongs to reading efficacy "I learn more from reading than most students in the class" has the most percentage of positive answers. Thus, one of the reasons which encourage students to do more reading activities is to learn more than others. It indicates that learning from reading, that is one of the intrinsic motivation aspects, plays a significant role in motivating second language learners to read. The other important items which heartens participants to read more is item 07, "I like being the best at reading" which is under subscale of competition in reading. Thus, the crucial reason to use this type of motivation is to be the best in their class or among other students. Therefore; these results demonstrate that different types of motivation are important in reading activities; competition and efficacy in reading are significant types of motivation which encourage them to read.

CONCLUSION

Despite all limitations, findings of present study demonstrate the significance of various subscales of motivation in reading activities. Furthermore, with self efficacy being associated with reading activities in English as a second language, intrinsic



motivation variables tend to be higher than extrinsic motivation variables. By and large, this significant issue should be pointed here, that however, extrinsic motivation is so important, intrinsic motivation has more powerful role in reading. To sum up we can say that reading efficacy and competition in reading motivate participants in higher degree than other subscales. Last but not least, we should mention this significant issue that extrinsic and intrinsic motivations empower each other in reading activities.

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APPENDIX

The motivation for reading questionnaire

School name: _____ Teacher name: _____

Student name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

We are interested in your reading. The sentences in this questionnaire describe how some students feel about reading. Read each sentence and decide whether it describes a person who is like you or different from you. There is no right or wrong answers. We only want to know how you feel about reading. For many of the statements, you should think about the kinds of things you read in your class.

Here are two samples to try before we start on the ones about reading:

If the statement is very different from you, circle a 1.

If the statement is a little different from you, circle a 2.

If the statement is a little like you, circle a 3.

If the statement is a lot like you, circle a 4.

	Very	A Little		
	Different	Different	A Little	A Lot
	From Me	From Me	Like Me	Like Me
I like ice cream.	1	2	3	4

	Very	A Little		
	Different	Different	A Little	A Lot
	From Me	From Me	Like Me	Like Me
I like spinach.	1	2	3	4

Okay, we are ready to start on the ones about reading. Remember, when you give your answers you should think about the things you are reading in your class. There are no right or wrong answers. We just are interested in YOUR ideas about reading. To give your answer, circle ONE number on each line.

The answer numbers are right next to each statement.

Let's turn the page and start. Please read each of the statements carefully, and then circle your answer.

Remember: Read each sentence and decide whether it describes a person who is like you or different from you. There are no right or wrong answers.

	Very	A Little		
	Different	Different	A Little	A Lot
	From Me	From Me	Like Me	Like Me
	1	2	3	4

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1) I don't know that I will do well in reading next year | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | |
| 2) I am a good reader | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | |
| 3) I learn more from reading than most students in the class | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | | 4 |



- 4) It is very important to me to be a good reader
1 2 3 4
- 5) In comparison to other activities I do, it is very important to me to be good reader 1 2
3 4
- 6) I try to get more answers right than my friends
1 2 3 4
- 7) I like being the best at reading
1 2 3 4
- 8) I like to finish my reading before other students
1 2 3 4
- 9) I like being the only one who knows an answer in something we read
1 2 3 4
- 10) It is important for me to see my name on a list of good readers
1 2 3 4
- 11) I am willing to work hard to read better than my friends
1 2 3 4
- 12) Grades are a good way to see how well you are doing in reading
1 2 3 4
- 13) I look forward to finding out my reading grades
1 2 3 4
- 14) I read to improve my grades
1 2 3 4
- 15) My parents ask me about my reading grade
1 2 3 4

